

# Hawai'i Dads (Makuakāne)

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## *Already limited local resources are dwindling*

### **Father Support Resources**

Although support groups are often seen as sources for information and tools to help us be better dads, in Hawai'i, support services or groups for dads have been few, or nonexistent.

And Hawai'i's slowing economy is having a crippling impact on funding for father support programs. Two years ago there were 6-7 "father parenting coaches" in Hawai'i—now there are only 2-3.

So the Hawai'i Coalition for Dads' web site ([www.pacthawaii.org/hcd.html](http://www.pacthawaii.org/hcd.html)) has become an even more valuable place where local dads can find materials and resources for learning to be more competent and involved fathers.

Support groups for fathers can take many forms. Historically, support groups happen in a neighborhood or community. And those real-time personal support group experiences are great. They offer a human connection close to home, which is a great advantage.

Some fathers prefer to join a virtual support group online. Father support online opens dads to a much broader range of fathers from diverse backgrounds, and offers anonymity which can be helpful in some circumstances.

### **Finding Support Groups**

Typically, fathers' support information can be found at local hospitals, preschools, elementary schools, or colleges. Local family therapists may be able to connect fathers to a group. Dads looking for a religiously oriented group can ask their religious leader or check bulletin boards at churches. For most local groups, word of mouth is the best approach. Do a lot of asking around—a little detective work can yield great dividends.

### **On-Line Father Support**

Check these resources and their links:

- **The Dads Club** at the National Fatherhood Initiative ([www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)) has a variety of educational materials for dads (and t-shirts, caps, etc.) as it works to educate and encourage dads across the country to be the best dads they can be!
- **The About Fatherhood Forum** at About.com:Fatherhood (<http://fatherhood.about.com/>) is used by many of its visitors as an online father support group. Dads can post questions, share experiences, respond to others' concerns, and link up with fathers around the world.
- **The Solo Parents Network** (<http://singleparentsnetwork.com>) offers chat, postings, and other interactive methods of connecting single dads or moms.
- **The iStepFamily Site** ([www.istepfamily.com/](http://www.istepfamily.com/)) is a great support group for blended families, stepfathers, and others who are working through the step-parenting process.

Whether just for fathers in general, or for a father with a special need or circumstance, fathers' support groups can offer connectivity, ideas, and camaraderie for any dad.

Adapted from About.com:Fatherhood ([http://fatherhood.about.com/od/mensissues/a/support\\_groups](http://fatherhood.about.com/od/mensissues/a/support_groups)) ~HI Dads~

**Visit HCD's web pages: [www.pacthawaii.org/hcd.html](http://www.pacthawaii.org/hcd.html)**

### ***New tool for breaking down barriers between moms and dads***

## **Mom As Gateway**

Mothers are a key factor for getting fathers involved. When both parents can effectively co-parent together, their children benefit greatly.

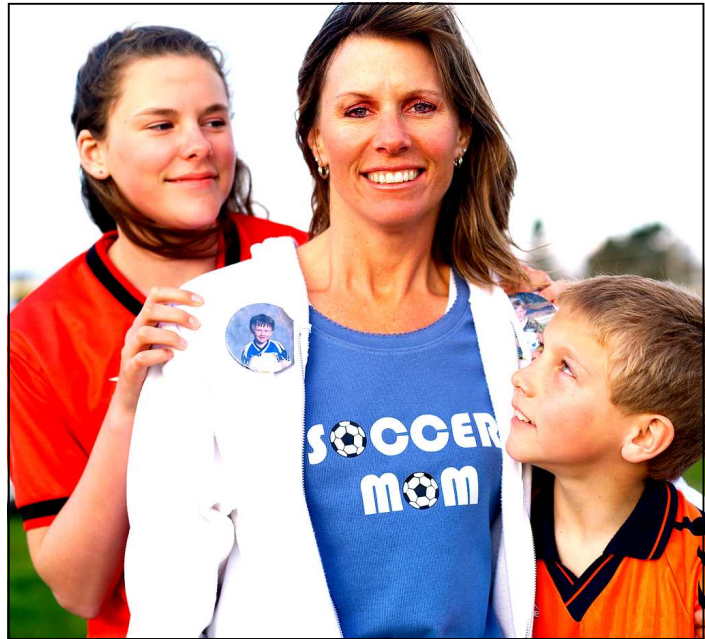
“I’ve had many organizations tell me that sometimes, their biggest barrier to getting Dad involved is, well, Mom!” e-mailed Becky Best, Director of Healthcare Programming at the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI).

So, NFI has developed the FREE *Mom As Gateway* curriculum module ([www.fatherhood.org/modules/](http://www.fatherhood.org/modules/)) to help break down barriers between mothers and fathers and facilitate helpful discussions and efforts towards co-parenting.

The *Mom As Gateway* module addresses what is known as Maternal Gatekeeping - when a mother’s beliefs about a father, as well as her behaviors, hinder a father’s involvement. Studies (see article below) show that mothers’ perceptions greatly influence fathers’ involvement.

Using this module, facilitators can bring moms together for three sessions:

- The Role of the Gatekeeper
- Power and Control in Relationships Between Men & Women
- Minimize Excessive Gatekeeping



“*Mom As Gateway* is a great tool for encouraging successful co-parenting and breaking down barriers between moms and dads, something I know can be a big challenge,” Becky says.

Because there are a lot of barriers to successfully involving dads, next year NFI plans to create several additional modules that address child support and domestic violence awareness. ~HI Dads~

### ***POPS CULTURE: A National Survey of Dads’ Attitudes on Fathering***

## **What keeps fathers from being engaged in the lives of their children**

A 2006 telephone survey of 701 American men selected to be representative of American fathers revealed that “work responsibilities” was most frequently seen by fathers married to their child’s mother as an obstacle to being a good father, with 47 percent saying that it was “a great deal” or “somewhat” of an obstacle. For these fathers “the media/popular culture,” “financial problems,” and “a lack of knowledge about how to be a good father,” ranked next.

**But, fathers not married to the mother of the “focal child” reported resistance and lack of cooperation from that mother to be the most important obstacle** to their being good fathers, followed by “work responsibilities,” “financial problems,” and “treatment of fathers by the courts.”

Ninety-nine percent of the fathers agreed that being a father was a very important part of who they are, and 94 percent “strongly agreed.” At a minimum, these findings indicate a strong social norm that being a father should be a crucial aspect of a father’s identity.

Click on the following web link to get a copy of the 30-page National Fatherhood Initiative’s *POPS CULTURE: A National Survey of Dads’ Attitudes on Fathering* ([www.fatherhood.org/research.asp](http://www.fatherhood.org/research.asp)).

~HI Dads~

## Parenting Advice for Fathers

By Wayne Parker, *Guide to Fatherhood* @ [www.About.com](http://www.About.com)

Looking for solid, practical advice for those thorny parenting problems? Under the Parenting Help tag at <http://fatherhood.about.com/> you can find information on child protection, discipline, talking about tough subjects and other important issues for fathers in their role as parent.

### Family Activities

Looking for things to do with your children that will help build your relationship with them? For information about bonding activities that will fill that important need in your child's life, check out: *Family Night: Simple and Powerful*, *Family Board Games for Dads and Kids*, *Your Family and the Internet*, and *Helping Children Learn to Work*.

### Quality Time

Not all family activities are created equal. Making time count positively with your children and building positive memories takes time and focus. Check out: *Ways to Spend Quality Time with the Kids*, *Turn off the TV and Tune Into Your Family*, *Storytelling Made Easy*, and *Eating Together: Mealtimes for Your Family*.

### Discipline

One of the biggest challenges for fathers is selecting appropriate discipline for their children. Discipline is all about modifying behavior, not about anger or retaliation. Check out these resources on effective discipline: *Behavior Contracting*, *Helping Children with Aggression*, *Kids Need CARE: Validating and Affirming our Children*, and *Principles for Respectful Discipline*.

### Education and Literacy

Interested in how best to help your children at school? Check these resources for being more involved, helping with homework, working with teachers and helping your children succeed at the business of education: *How Fathers Can Help Their Children Read*, *What Did You Learn in School Today?*, and *Homework Helping Secrets*.

### Stepfathering and Blended Families

Stepfathers face significant challenges as they move into a situation where they are often unwanted and unappreciated. It takes special skills and attitudes to be a successful stepfather. Check out these resources for stepfathers and fathers in blended families: *Books to Help Stepfathers Be Successful*, *Stepfathering Your Teen*, *Creating Healthy Boundaries in Stepfamilies*, and *So Does a Stepdad Have Any Rights at All?*

### Mental Health and Counseling

Sometimes our family or our children will need intervention due to issues like depression, aggression, or other emotional or mental challenges. Learn what fathers can do when mental illness arises and how to find help for their families at: *What Every Child Needs for Good Mental Health*, *When Do I Need a Family Counselor?*, and *Building Your Child's Self Esteem*.

### Work/Life Balance

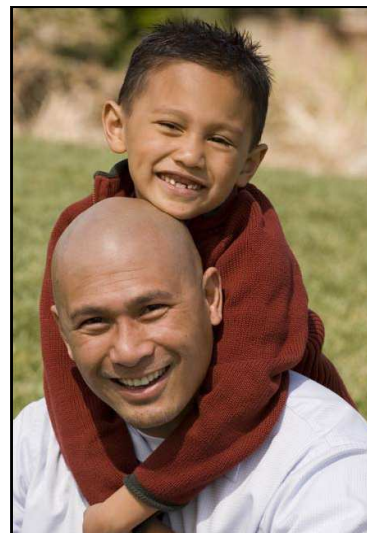
Some of the hardest balancing dads do is coordinating work life, home life and personal life. Find information about achieving and maintaining work-life balance at: *SuperDads: Managing Expectations of Modern Fathers*, *Family Friendly Workplaces for Fathers*, *Recovering from Workaholism*, *Simplifying Your Life*, and *Saying No to the Unimportant*.

### Parenting Teenagers

Helping teens succeed in life is a major undertaking, particularly when influences other than parents start taking a front seat for a teenager. Check out: *Things a Dad of Teens Needs to Know*, *Teens and Cell Phones: Advice For Dads*, *What Teens Wish Their Dads Knew About Them*, and *When Your Kids Are Popular with the Wrong Crowd*.

### Fathers and Daughters

Since no dads were raised as daughters, we sometimes have a hard time relating to our female offspring. Find tips and information for being a great dad to your girls at: *Top Ten Ways to Stay Close to Your Daughter As She Grows Up*, and *What a Dad Needs to Know About Wedding Budgets*. ~Hi Dads~





*From Mr. Dad*

## Defining “Daddy”

**Q:** It seems that the definition of “fatherhood” has changed a lot over the years, while the definition of being a mom doesn’t seem to have changed all that much. What does it mean to be a father these days?

**A:** To fully integrate the idea of being a father into your self-identity, it’ll help to understand exactly what being a father actually involves. One of the most consistent findings by researchers is that **new fathers almost always feel unprepared for their new role.**

Personally, I would have been surprised if it were otherwise. As writer David L. Giveans says, “It is both unfair and realistic to expect a man...to automatically ‘father’ when his life experiences have skillfully isolated him from learning how.”

When most of our fathers were raising us, a “good father” was synonymous with “good provider.” He supported his family financially, mowed the lawn, washed the car, and maintained discipline in the home. No one seemed to care whether he ever spent much time with his children; in fact, he was discouraged from doing so, and told to leave the kids to his wife, the “good mother.”

Today, yesterday’s “good father” has retroactively become an emotionally distant, uncaring villain. And today’s “good father,” besides still being the breadwinner, is expected to be a real presence—physically and emotionally—in his kids’ lives. That, in a nutshell, is exactly what most new fathers want. Most of us have no intention of being wait-till-your-father-comes-home daddies and want to be more involved with our children than our own fathers were.

The problem is, we just haven’t had the training. The solution? Jump right in. **The “maternal instinct” that women are supposedly born with is actually acquired on the job.** And that’s exactly where you’re going to develop your ‘paternal instinct.’

Another question you’re going to have to ask yourself here is how being a father fits with your definition of being a man. There are two major reasons why so many of us would prefer to drive ten miles down the wrong road than to stop and ask for directions.

**First**, from the time we were little boys, we’ve been socialized to associate knowledge with masculinity—in other words, real men know everything, and admitting to being lost is a sign of weakness (and, of course, a lack of masculinity).

**Second**—and even worse—we’ve also been socialized to be strong, independent, and goal oriented, and to consider asking for help as a sign of weakness (and, again, a lack of masculinity).

Nothing in the world can bring these two factors into play faster than the birth of a baby. Because of the near-total absence of active, involved, nurturing male role models, most new fathers can’t seriously claim that they know what to do with a new baby (although never having cooked before didn’t prevent my father from insisting he could make the best blueberry pancakes we’d ever taste; and boy, was he wrong).

Getting help seems like the obvious solution to the ignorance problem, but most men don’t want to seem helpless or expose their lack of knowledge by asking anyone. In addition, too many dads are aware of the prevailing attitude that a man who is actively involved with his children—especially if he’s the primary caretaker—is not as masculine as his less-involved brothers.

It’s easy to see how the whole experience of becoming a father can lead so many new fathers to wonder secretly (no one ever openly admits to having these thoughts) whether or not they’ve retained their masculinity. All too often, the result of this kind of thinking is that fathers leave the entire child rearing to their partners and leave their kids essentially without a father.

**“Children are at a particular disadvantage when they are deprived of constructive experiences with their fathers,”** writes psychologist Henry Biller. “Infants and young children are unlikely to be provided with other opportunities to form a relationship with a caring and readily available adult male if their father is not emotionally committed to them.”

Source: *Mr. Dad* ([www.mrdad.com](http://www.mrdad.com)). ~HI Dads~

From Mr. Dad

## The Myth of the Bumbling Father

**Q:** You've written a lot about negative media portrayals of fathers. But aren't they just presenting life the way it is? Isn't it a reality that men just aren't the most responsible parents when it comes to childrearing?



**A:** One can reasonably argue that the images of men and women in children's literature are simply reflections of reality. It's still true that for a variety of reasons women in this country do the bulk of the childcare.

But if children's literature only reflected reality, why aren't fifty percent of the families divorced? Why aren't fifteen to twenty percent of the single parents in these books fathers? Why, for that matter, aren't smokers, alcoholics, and drug abusers adequately represented?

The answer is that literature doesn't always reflect reality. In fact, it could be said that it sometimes does quite the opposite, reflecting some kind of reality that doesn't exist; the world the way we imagine it rather than the way it is.

Remember all those gender-neutral firefighters from Richard Scary and other authors? The truth is that in the real world, only two percent of the 1.2 million people who risk their lives to fight fires in this country are women. But that hasn't prevented us from all but banishing the word "fireman" from the English language.

Far more than two percent of all the nurturing parents are men, and, in raw numbers, there are far more actively involved, nurturing, loving fathers than there are female firefighters. Still, images of nurturing fathers are practically nowhere to be found.

There's little question that reading about female firefighters (and police officers and construction workers and just about any other profession where women are a small minority) boosts girls' self-esteem and reinforces in their minds—and everyone else's, for that matter—the idea that women have lives beyond the home and that there's nothing girls and women can't do.

Little boys, on the other hand, are given a far more restricted list of life options: they can do anything they want, as long as they financially support their families and leave the nurturing to the nearest female.

Source: Mr. Dad ([www.mrdad.com](http://www.mrdad.com)); photo ([www.fathers.com](http://www.fathers.com)). ~HI Dads~

## Support the Hawai'i Coalition for Dads.

*Help promote involved, nurturing, responsible fatherhood in Hawai'i.*

☐ Please keep me informed about the activities of the Hawai'i Coalition for Dads.

☐ I would like to volunteer to help; contact me.

☐ Here is my contribution. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

~ Your donations are tax-deductible. ~

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to: **Hawai'i Coalition for Dads/PACT** Phone: 841-2245

...and send it to: 1485 Linapuni St. #105; Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819

E-mail: [HawaiiDads@pacthawaii.org](mailto:HawaiiDads@pacthawaii.org)

## Hawai'i Coalition for Dads

*Promoting involved, nurturing, responsible fatherhood*

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- *HCD Kaua'i*: Bernard Carvalho, 241-4419
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### Steering Committee

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Diane Tabangay	Ho'omana Wong
Dan Yahata	

*The Hawai'i Coalition for Dads, with funding from the HMSA Foundation under the umbrella of Parents And Children Together (PACT), is a group of individuals and organizations that shares information about services to fathers and promotes involved, nurturing, responsible fatherhood.*

### **GOALS:**

1. To enhance the ability of Hawai'i's children to grow in peaceful and safe environments.
2. To increase community awareness about fatherhood.
3. To promote the availability and accessibility of quality, father-centered community resources.
4. To advocate for informed public policy regarding fatherhood.
5. To strengthen community collaboration in support of fatherhood.
6. To respect and honor everyone's unique role in children's lives.

## **Fatherhood & Family Resources**

1. **Hilo**: YWCA of Hawaii Island (Healthy Start) (961-3877; [ywcawahaiiisland.org](http://ywcawahaiiisland.org))
2. **Kailua-Kona**: Family Support Services of West Hawai'i (326-7778; [fsswh.org](http://fsswh.org))
3. **Kaua'i**: Nana's Place/Child and Family Service (338-0252; [cfs-hawaii.org](http://cfs-hawaii.org))
4. **Maui**: Da dee Fatherhood Program—Maui Family Support Services (242-0900; [mfss.org](http://mfss.org));  
Neighborhood Place of Wailuku (986-0700); Maui Economic Opportunity (249-2990; [meo.org](http://meo.org))
5. **Molokai**: Mediation Center of Molokai (553-3844)

### Oahu (and statewide):

6. Hawai'i State Commission on Fatherhood ([www.hawaii.gov/dhs/fatherhood/fatherhood](http://www.hawaii.gov/dhs/fatherhood/fatherhood))
7. TIFFE (Nurturing Fathers; Playgroups) (596-8433; [www.tiffe.org](http://www.tiffe.org))
8. PACT (Family Centers; Hana Like; Head Start; Family Peace Center) (847-3285; [www.pacthawaii.org](http://www.pacthawaii.org))
9. Navy Fleet & Family Support Center (Boot Camp For New Dads) (474-1999; [www.greatlifeohawaii.com](http://www.greatlifeohawaii.com))
10. PARENTS (235-0488); 11. Kathy's Parenting Solutions (352-3303; [kathysparentingsolutions.com](http://kathysparentingsolutions.com))
12. The Baby Hui (groups for Dads, and Moms) (735-2484; [thebabyhui.org](http://thebabyhui.org))
13. The Parent Line (Info & Referral) (526-1222; [www.theparentline.org](http://www.theparentline.org)) 14. AUW – 211 ([auw.org/211](http://auw.org/211))
15. HPIRC (HI Parental Information & Resource Centers) (841-6177; [hawaiipirc.org](http://hawaiipirc.org))
16. DOE Family Support (PCNC; Families for R.E.A.L.; VISTA) (733-4476; [familysupport.k12.hi.us](http://familysupport.k12.hi.us))
17. SPIN (Special Parent Information Network) (586-8126; [spinhawaii.org](http://spinhawaii.org))
18. Big Brothers Big Sisters (support for single Dads, and Moms) (521-3811; [bigshonolulu.org](http://bigshonolulu.org))
19. Good Beginnings Alliance (Playgroups) (531-5502; [goodbeginnings.org](http://goodbeginnings.org))
20. Tutu and Me (traveling preschool for Hawaiian families) (524-7633; [tutuandme.org](http://tutuandme.org))
21. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center (Hawaiian families) (847-1302; [qlcc.org](http://qlcc.org))
22. ALU LIKE (Hawaiian families) (535-6700; [alulike.org](http://alulike.org))

**Religious resources:** Contact your place of worship...church, temple, synagogue

### Internet Resources (check on their "Links," too):

1. **mr.dad** ([mrdad.com](http://mrdad.com))
2. **fathers.com** ([fathers.com](http://fathers.com))
3. **Nurturing Father** ([nurturingfathers.com](http://nurturingfathers.com))
4. **Nat'l Fatherhood Initiative** ([fatherhood.org](http://fatherhood.org))
5. **ParentingTime.net** ([parentingtime.net](http://parentingtime.net))